

Chapter 16

Grade Eleven – United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in Modern United States History

Revisions and considerations

I.

There should be a fifth and sixth bullet at the beginning of the chapter (in between the current line 9 and 10, and in between lined 35 and 36) as follows, or in the spirit of:

- How does the United States interact with and within the global community?
- How does the United States impact the environment?

Both of these themes are crucial in understanding the place the United States holds within the context of its own power (power is a comparison relatively to neighbors) and the environment includes resources and other effects and causes of the policies (seeking oil in the 21st century, going west for pelts and furs in the 19th century).

Furthermore, considerable scholarship is departing from the Western (USA and Europe) centric approach to history, and moving towards associating history from the lens of World History. In essence, United states history is merely a partition of World History as it is now, more modern scholarship seeks to break down artificial and outdated academic walls and generate a discourse. This is, after all, what we are seeking to teach our future students with the onset of the Literacy standards of the Common Core.

II.

Effort should be made to correct the flaw in calling United States History “American” history. American history represents two whole continents and numerous countries. It is egotistical to consider United States History a synonym of American History. Additionally, correctly identifying the United States will make it easier for students to link the united states to the world by eliminating the confusion of calling the United States “America”.

III.

There should be a noticeable decline of biographic analysis of “Great Men” (presidents and other figures) as history includes depth that is not limited to single individuals. Agency of minorities, and growth of systems equally (if not more so) contributes to the development of the United States. This is not to say that individuals do not contribute to the direction the United States follows, rather this would make it easier to learn history from a more thematic approach, which again would make it easier to facilitate the connections to world history.

IV.

Throughout the various sections, on in an appendix in the back, provide relevant and probing Objective questions such as “Why did the United States enter into WWI?” (you can place this at the end of line 338, or in an appendix). Teachers are the main conveyance of the material, and as such should have as many resources as possible available. However, having objectives posted as potential, optional, or as ideas to use, will hopefully sidestep any opposition from unions who are emotionally opposed to the inclusion.

V.

Attention should be drawn to the periodization of the sections; “why do we separate the units in this year? (speaking of line 380 and other section headers) periodization is an important Historical Thinking skill that allows students to create dialogue not only of content of history, but the organization of it. This is incredibly important as a College Preparedness aspect as well. The pinnacle of historical thinking is the ability to understand the fluctuations in historical analysis itself, (called Historiography) and thus more powerfully create their own analysis based not only on the historical text, but to also compare other historians’ analyses.

VI.

The notion of the “Victorian Duality”, meaning having a proper public life, and a risqué, perverted, LGBT private life, is a topic that can be used to address cultural contradictions as a parallel to political and global contradictions. One example for United States History is the claim that Empire is an abomination, while maintaining colonies and enforcing the Monroe Doctrines and Roosevelt’s (TR) corollary. This would work well for a continuing theme in the era after Civil War and pre WWII.

VII.

As the school year progresses, it may be a good idea to introduce Thematic Discussion. This will allow for discussions on Change and Continuity; what has changed over time? What has stayed the same over time?

VIII.

Teachers should be encouraged to use Primary documents as well as secondary sources in order to teach their classes. As such, at the end of each section, or in an appendix, there should be a list of books, authors, documents that may be used to supplement the various sections.